



**Dismantling A Girl's Wellbeing:  
Issues and Solutions**

### Wellbeing 2017


- Where are girls at present?
- Within themselves + wider environment
- What factors are eroding their sense of self?

- ✓ Consumerism
- ✓ Sexualisation
- ✓ Narcissism

How to restore their wellbeing



### How Are Girls Right Now?



**Plan International Australia and Our Watch study 600 girls aged 16-19**

- Ninety percent girls felt they are not treated equally to boys
- More than half of teen girls said they are 'seldom or never valued' for their brains over their looks.
- One in three girls always did more house work than their brothers.
- Almost half of girls did not feel safe on the way to school.
- Just one in six (14%) girls felt they are given the same opportunities to get ahead in life as boys.

**Girls identified higher levels of equality in Nicaragua and Ecuador**

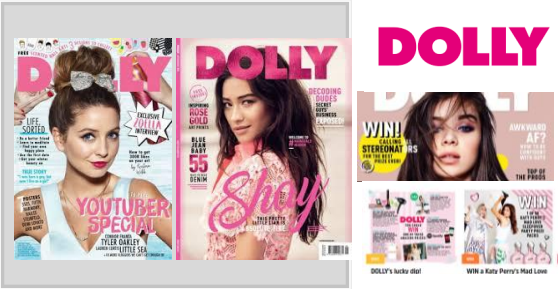
[Everyday sexism: girls' and young women's views on gender inequality in Australia](#), 11 October 2016, Plan International Australia and Our Watch

'Kids grow up much faster than they used to, and they move on faster,' Jim Silver, toy industry commentator.

- BARBIE FIGURES
- sales falling 6% to \$1.99 billion
- core demographic used to be 3 to 9
- demographic has shrunk 3 to 6



### Performance Culture = Creating and Maintaining A Fake Self



### Internals + Externals

Analysed the results of many previous studies that used Rotter's Scale with young people 1960 - 2002

Internals - Intrinsic Goals = personal development + meaningful philosophy of life



Externals - External Goals = esteem based on looks, possessions, what others think

Young people's belief they have control over their destinies has declined sharply

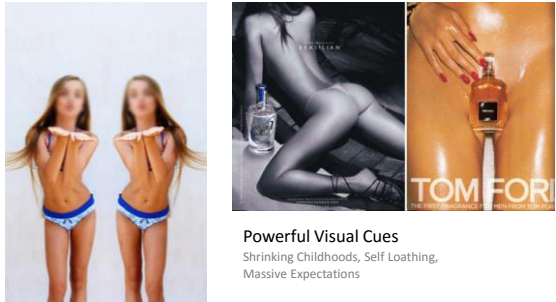
Average scores shifted dramatically - for children aged 9 to 14 and college students - away from the Internal toward the External end of the scale

The average 2002 college student had a more external locus of control than 80% of college students in the early 1960s.

The rise of Externality = rise in anxiety and depression = victim mentality


Trying to be all grown up....




### Powerful Visual Cues

Shrinking Childhoods, Self Loathing, Massive Expectations

### Childhood Idols



### Toxic Culture

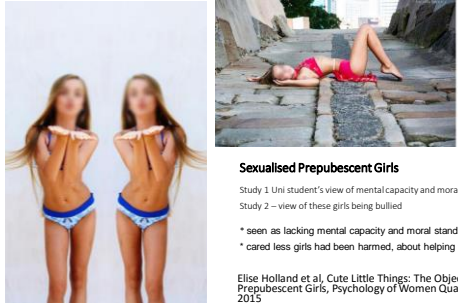


"When you have sex with a guy, they want it to be like a porno. They want anal and oral right away. Oral is, like, the new kissing."

### Toxic Legacy



"It was watching [adult star] Heather Brooke that gave me the mind-blowing skills I have now when it comes to giving a blow job." Dirty Angel," 22, blog [Tastes Like Kisses](#), who started surfing porn in her early teens



**Sexualised Prepubescent Girls**

Study 1 - Uni student's view of mental capacity and morals  
 Study 2 - view of these girls being bullied

- \* seen as lacking mental capacity and moral standing
- \* cared less girls had been harmed, about helping them

Elise Holland et al. Cute Little Things: The Objectification of Prepubescent Girls, *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 27 August 2015




**How Safe Are Young Women?**

Girls 10 and 14 = the greatest proportion of victim/survivors of sexual violence (A/C based on Police Data).

Young women between 15 and 24 years were the second largest category (A/C based on Police Data).

CASA Forum, Centres Against Sexual Assault



**Wider Environment**

- One woman on average a week is killed by a partner or former partner. [Australian Institute of Statistics \(AIC\), 2015.](#)
- One in three Australian women has experienced physical violence since age of 15
- [Cox, R \(2013\) \*Violence against women: a review of the evidence\*. National Research Institute for Women, Canberra. Report Issue 1. Australia's National Research Institute for Women, Canberra, 2013.](#)
- One in five Australian women has experienced sexual violence. *Ibid*
- One in four Australian women has experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner. *Ibid*
- **Of those women who experience violence, more than half have children in their care.**


National Crime Research Centre (2014) *Violence against women: a review of the evidence*. National research Institute for Women, Canberra. Report Issue 1. Australia's National Research Institute for Women, Canberra, 2013. See note 2.



**Public and Private Narrative**

**Inner Misogyny**

- constant feeling of shame and worthlessness
- inner critic that won't let up
- hate themselves
- believe everything bad people say about them


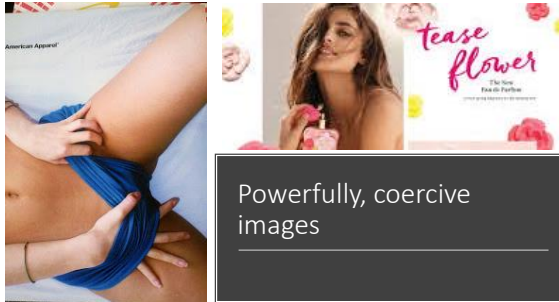



**ABS Stats On Suicide**

26% rise in female suicides over 2010 to 2015


Manage Your Brand




Powerfully, coercive images

Girls vulnerable every which way




American Apparel

**FOMO**



Fear of Missing Out

**YOLO**



You Only Live Once

The Hair Thing



Brows ....

- Threading, waxing, plucking, tinting, nourishing
- £20m turnover
- Expected to grow by 15 – 20% over 2016
- Net-A-Porter offers 150 brow cosmetics
- *"Women used to say the one product they couldn't leave the house without applying was mascara. Now it's their brows that make them feel put-together."* Jared Bailey, global brow expert, Benefit




Porn-star Trim


- To have a 'clean feeling' down there
- Pubic hair is disgusting
- 'I find it easier to get it all whipped off than to keep it trimmed,' sexpert Tracy Cox
- Oral sex is 'better'
- Waxing is already painful, so why not?

'GOING PINK?'

- Want to be 'spotless' and 'clean and fresh'?
- Anal and vulva lightening
- Roll it into a Brazilian treatment for \$100 - \$200
- Need ongoing bleaching
- Risks of herpes, bacterial infection, burning and scarring



Joanna Angel 28, [www.joannaangel.com](#), a veteran porn actress, "The girls these days just seem to come to the set porn-ready."




Trying to be someone else's idea of amazing ....

Female Genital Cosmetic Surgery (FGCS)

Labiaplasty (trimming of the labia minora, less commonly labia majora), hymenoplasty, vaginoplasty (vaginal reconstruction), mons pubis liposuction, vaginal 'rejuvenation' or laser 'rejuvenation', G-spot augmentation and Orgasm-shot.

- 2003-2013 Australia = threefold increase in labiaplasties
- Australian government statistics = 140% increase in requests for rebatable vulvoplasty from 2001 -2013, without a concomitant rise in genital disease diagnoses.
- 447 GPs - 35% reported seeing females younger than 18 years of age requesting FGCS



Female genital cosmetic surgery: a cross-sectional survey exploring knowledge, attitude and practice of general practitioners, M Simonis, R Manocha, JJ Ong. BMJ Open Volume 6, issue 9

### Female Genital Cosmetic Surgery (FGCS)

- nearly all GPs seeing women with genital normality concerns and patients requesting genital cosmetic surgery, suspected or diagnosed a range of psychological problems.
- 67% anxious
- 59% relationship difficulties
- 55% body dysmorphia
- 50% depressed
- 42% sexual dysfunction
- 28% eating disorders
- 24% history of sexual abuse



*Female genital cosmetic surgery: a cross-sectional survey exploring knowledge, attitude and practice of general practitioners, M Simonis, R Manocha, J J Ong, BMJ Open Volume 6, Issue 9*



### The Boy Thing

**BRING OUT THE BEAST**

**How Am I Meant To Do All This?**

No Point in Holding Back

**Abercrombie & Fitch**

**Friends with benefits is another way of saying good enough to hang with, good enough to lay with, but never good enough to be with.**

**"FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS" : BY TYPE**

let's just be friends with benefits

...sometimes... can i get on your health insurance?

Hooking Up Smart

**HAVE NO CHOICE**

**Increasing Sense of Powerlessness**





### How Does This Play Out?


- 130 men + women age 16 - 18
- The main reason for having anal sex were that guys wanted to copy what they saw in pornography.
- Men expected that women would generally not wish to engage in anal sex, and so would need to be persuaded or coerced
- Women being badgered for anal sex is considered normal
- Women felt there was no choice

C Martston, R Lewis, Anal heterosex among young people and implications for health promotion: a qualitative study in the UK, BMJ Open, Vol 4, Issue 8.


### When Girls Objectify Themselves

- don't feel they have any rights
- terrified of being isolated and not being seen as cool
- girls only able to see herself as how boys see them
- Girls start to see themselves as predators see them
- with oral and anal sex now just like kissing, the expectations are that they'll be up for a whole lot more




### Objectification




- Habitual body monitoring
- Increase shame
- Heightened anxiety
- Diminished self awareness

### Upskirting




### Drink Spiking



- 4 out of 5 victims are female
- about half of drink spiking victims are aged under 24
- 20 - 30% involve sexual assault
- majority of spiking = 'prank spiking'
- concerns about under-reporting
- difficulty in reporting as there's often memory loss

Natalie Taylor et al., National Project on Drink Spiking: Investigating the extent and nature of drink spiking in Australia, Australian Institute of Criminology 2004

### How Safe Are Girls?



- Eight out of ten women aged 18 to 24 were harassed on the street in the past year, Johnson, M. and Bennett, E. (2015)
- Young women (18-24 years) experience significantly higher rates of physical and sexual violence than women in older age groups, ABS 2012



**Mental Health**


- Around half of all lifetime mental disorders start by the mid-teens
- 2007 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing of adults (ages 16–85 years) the prevalence of mental disorders is highest in the 25–34 age group (24%)
- For all age groups, the prevalence of mental disorders is higher in females compared with males.

• Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2015. Australia's welfare 2015. Australia's welfare series no. 12. Cat. no. AUS 189. Canberra: AIHW



The End Result?

- Who am I??????????



Teens have trouble distinguishing between what they truly like and what marketers have told them to like



Reclaim the Space for Girls To Appreciate Their True Selves



Take Home 1

Strong Media Awareness Training At Primary Level

- Kids
- Teachers/school counsellors
- Parents




[http:// mediasmarts.ca](http://mediasmarts.ca)  
[commonsensemedia.org](http://commonsensemedia.org)





**Take Home 2. Child Protection**


**Take Home 3**  
Mitigate Against Impact 24/7 News Coverage

World is unsafe

- Apocalyptic scenarios
- Worried about natural disaster on holiday
- Losing my family
- Wanting to die with friends and family





**What To Do With Fear?**



Every period of history has challenges – world war, famines etc

Community and school culture that promotes new ideas

**Take Home 4: Safety Training Nationwide**

Better awareness of their body, attitudes, emotions and response patterns to stress.

Feel strong in their own body

Experience their power, directing it from a calm centre

Convert their power into actions, especially in 'paralysing' situations of physical or emotional violence.

Deal with stressful situations without losing contact with what is safe and healthy for you.


Sense and experience their own personal space, to have the courage to take that space, and defend it if necessary.

**Kyoshi Liz Mahler**

**Safety**

Assistance to recognise toxic situations.

- ✓ Deconstruct scenes in teen sitcoms and movies with unhelpful messages and values
- ✓ Help them integrate this material by creating ads and editorial to help younger girls



### Safety

**When am I vulnerable?**  
**Understanding emotional triggers**


- peer pressure
- wanting to be loved
- needing to feel grown up
- believing sex = love
- afraid of someone

**Positive Coercion**

- I really love you and always will
- You're the prettiest

**Negative Coercion**

- I'll leave
- Your family sucks
- You're such a child!
- Who'd want you anyway?



### Safety and Boundaries

**Role play scripts to deal with tricky situations**

**You don't love me**  
 ✓ I love you but I don't want to do this


**You're ruining everything**  
 ✓ I'm sorry but I need you to stop

**Everyone else is doing this**  
 ✓ I'm not everyone, I need you to stop

**But you let me do this before**  
 ✓ Sorry but this doesn't feel right now

**Go on, if you do this I'll buy you**  
 ✓ Stop this or I'll report you.

**Practice walking away calmly without retaliating**




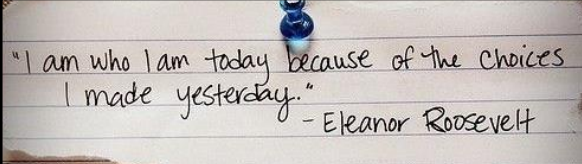
### Safety

**Ring 000**

- stay calm
- note the address/ nearest cross streets

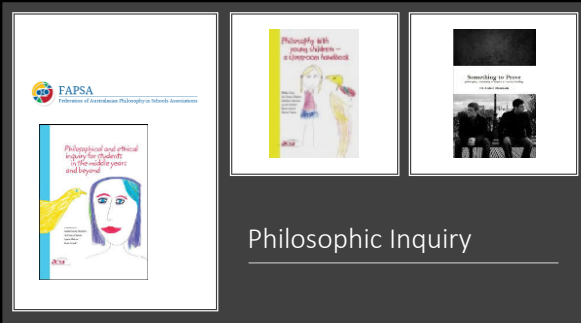
**1800RESPECT**

- 24-hour phone sexual assault service

"I am who I am today because of the choices I made yesterday." - Eleanor Roosevelt

**Take Home 5 - Choice matters**




**Philosophic Inquiry**

### Philosophic Inquiry

Curious Mind = Innovative Mind

**I HAVE NO SPECIAL TALENTS. I AM ONLY PASSIONATELY CURIOUS.**  
 -ALBERT EINSTEIN

- Different is good
- I Don't Have to Know Everything
- It's Good to Ask Questions
- Failure Can Help Get You To Where You Need To Go



**Philosophic Inquiry**


- visualising, modelling, idea organising, categorising, inferring, transferring and problem solving
- higher order thinking skills = decision making, setting priorities, and choosing alternatives

- create communities of inquiry where children learn to value **independent autonomous thinking**
- move on from students being taught what to think, to how to think
- think and try out ideas, evaluate if they've worked
- what makes certain ideas work? what makes them fail?

**Overpowering images**

- \* Compelling
- \* Hard to avoid
- \* Isolating


Need to experience life at a human scale



**Take Home 6**

**Bring Life Back To Human Scale**  
Jan Gehl, Copenhagen

- Intimate spaces
- Human focused
- Navigable areas in cities – walking corridors
- Opportunity for connection






**Benefits of Creativity**

- Greater problem solving skills.
- Correlated with increased optimism.
- A greater sense of well being.
- Creative people are rarely bored
- Correlated with decreased anxiety
- Gives you a greater understand of yourself.
- Greater self confidence.
- Creative people are better at expressing themselves.
- Creative people tend to feel more balanced.

**"Creativity is Just Connecting Things"**

**Take Home 8**  
**Creating Connecting**

**Creative Moments**

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contemplate – recalibrate – be with their own ideas – create something unique


When enterprise started, during the Renaissance.



Categories = kings and queens, warfare, religion, ancestry, mythology, invention, architecture and the spice trade. Outfits started term three made in and outside of school, with twice weekly workshops. After school from 3pm to 4.30pm in weeks four, five and six and whole school days dedicated to them in week seven.

### Take Home 7 Child versus, Adult Self

- Who's running the show?
- In teen's life?
- In friendships?
- My child self?
- My adult self?




### Take Home 8 Where Do I Belong?

Do You Know (DYK) Scale  
Duke & Fivush

Adds to internal locus of control

- = higher self esteem
- = lower levels of anxiety
- = fewer behavioural problems
- = better outcomes educational/emotional/behavioural difficulties




## THE GENERATION GAP

Take Home 9  
Welcome to A Girl's World

It is up to us to create the future we want for our girls

[www.maggiehamilton.org](http://www.maggiehamilton.org)

